

Miller, Kristina

From: Mendez, Thomas
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 12:05 PM
To: R5 ER Notification List
Cc: Miller, Kristina; Haag, Daniel; Maguire, Andrew; Emmanouil, Stavros; Zintak, Leonard; Kondreck, Robert; Mendoza, Ramon; Maritote, John
Subject: R5 ER Notification #4 - Camras School Mercury Spill, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

Region 5 ER Notification #4: Camras School Mercury Spill, Chicago, Illinois (NRC Report #1241158)

Report as of: 1130 hrs CST, March 29, 2019

Overview: Students were discovered handling mercury by Chicago Public School District (CPS) staff at Camras Elementary School located at 3000 N. Mango St in Chicago, Illinois on March 26, 2019. A broken barometer was the source of the unknown amount of mercury. CPS staff discovered the students handling the mercury and contacted the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Chicago Fire Department (CFD) for assistance in evaluating the threat. CPS, CDPH, and CFD determined the students involved in the handling of the mercury, assessed where the mercury could be tracked, and performed targeted screening prior to students leaving for the day. Elevated mercury levels were discovered in various parts of the building during the initial assessment.

The school is still currently closed and clean-up activities are being conducted by CPS contractors. CPS contractors are concentrating cleanup activities on the area of the barometer break and adjacent areas. Passive heating of the school using the schools HVAC equipment is ongoing.

State, Local, and other Federal Agency Action: CDPH and CFD initially responded to the mercury spill. Illinois EPA was informed of the mercury spill. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) was contacted for technical assistance and has consulted with CDPH on clearance levels for the school classrooms as well as the students' personal belongings.

EPA Actions: Currently three EPA OSCs and six EPA START contractors continue to assist CDPH and CPS in determining the extent of the mercury contamination. EPA is currently assisting CDPH and CPS to determine if mercury has migrated off-site. No homes have been identified as of yet at levels above recommended by CDPH. CPS staff identified 26 students who may have come in contact with elemental mercury. Screening of those students' personal belongings (backpacks, shoes, and clothing) has shown some elevated levels for mercury vapor. These items have been isolated and will be treated by heating and venting in an effort to clear them of contamination and/or disposal.

CPS's contractor continues to conduct remediation of affected classrooms/areas of the internal structure of the school. CPS has maintained the request of EPA's continued technical assistance as well as support with post-remediation confirmation/clearance sampling. EPA will conduct a joint screening with the CPS contractor of the affected rooms in the early afternoon of March 29th, 2019 to reassess the current levels. A meeting for parents, with no media present will be held at 16:30 hrs on March 29th, 2019. EPA will be present to discuss their completed screening activities at this meeting as well as anticipated activities.

Future updates will be provided via PolRep.

Media Interest:

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/news/mercury-spill-school-camras-elementary-chicago-public-schools/> (incorrectly states thermometer)
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-mercury-spill-elementary-school-20190327-story.html>

EPA Region 5 OSC contacts:

Kristina Miller, 312-237-5685

Dan Haag, 312-886-6906

Ramon Mendoza, 312-802-1409